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SUBJECT: USAID SUCCESS STORIES SURPRISE NIGERIANS, COUNTER  
ANTI-AMERICAN VIEWS: PART ONE

Ref: State 93896

11. Summary. Nigerians reacting to Mission-sponsored media reports June - September 2003 on U.S.-Nigeria partnership successes on health, HIV/AIDS, agriculture, education, and conflict resolution, say they are amazed at the level of support given to Nigeria by the U.S. Government. They expressed similar sentiments on their assessment of media reports on the Ambassador's Self-Help and the Ambassador's Girl Scholarship programs, as well as the Widernet's university interconnectivity program. The positive impact of the success stories was clearly evident during the recent defeat of stiff conservative northern opposition to the August polio vaccination rounds. Reactions have been very positive on USAID's contributions towards revival of agriculture, especially gum arabic trade, and the LEAP program to upgrade primary educational standards in northern Nigeria. The Basketball for Peace Project is another success story that Nigerians say they value greatly because the program targets jobless youths in the crisis-prone Kaduna State. Radio listeners, television viewers and Hausa readers in 19 northern States, including conservative Muslim radicals in Nasarawa, Kano, Kaduna, Sokoto, Katsina, Borno, Plateau, Zamfara, and Jigawa States, say the success stories surprised them because they never knew the U.S. was doing so much for Nigeria. Hopefully, these images may change some of their negative views about the U.S. End Summary.

12. DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITY: Between June and September 2003, the Embassy's Public Affairs Section facilitated a series of radio, television and print success stories on national, regional and local media, promoting American generosity, and countering anti-American views in conservative Muslim communities in northern Nigeria. The project was implemented with IIP and PA funding (reftel). This is a preliminary report. Reactions to the success stories are still being received, and more media reports on other programs, including HIV/AIDS and the Ambassador's Girl Scholarship programs, are still being aired. PAS Lagos is still compiling a report. These will be reported separately.

13. Success Stories coverage by Category:

HEALTH: Polio

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TELEVISION:

August 17-September 11, 2003, (60-second) polio eradication jingle (60 slots) in Hausa on Katsina State Radio, using materials provided by USAID to explain examples of success including small pox.

August 26, 2003, "Polio Eradication: A shared responsibility" (25-minute National Television (NTA) Documentary, featured USAID's Nigerian Health partners' countering allegations by some Muslim leaders that the polio vaccine contains birth control medication to reduce northern Muslim populations.

September 6, 11, and 13, 2003, "Nigerian Expert says Polio vaccine is safe, USAID deserves praise for leading the social mobilization strategy to eradicate polio in the north" (25-minute news documentary on Sokoto State Television, featured interviews with USAID, UNICEF and WHO representatives.

September 10, 2003, "Polio can render the child invalid for life" (5-minute news report in English and Hausa on Sokoto

State Television, featured USAID's Kano office coordinator, Halima Ben Umar, explaining that the Agency's effort is to ensure polio eradication as part of a global campaign, not population control. She emphasized that among other things, the USAID is working with local government mobilization committees on advocacy and sensitivity training for town criers, vaccinators and district coordinators.

September 10, 2003, "Muslim viral expert debunks allegations of impurities in the polio vaccine" (5-minute news report and interview in English and Hausa on Katsina State Television. The report featured Dr. Hassan Rafindadi, a Muslim Consultant Pathologist, who had conducted an independent analysis of the polio vaccine, and pronounced it safe and free from any impurities or HIV virus.

September 11, 2003, "Sokoto State Governor changes mind on polio vaccination" (5-minute report on National Television NTA, featured Sokoto State Governor pledging support for the polio program. The report also featured USAID's Garba Abdu, emphasizing the USAID's other Health contributions to ensure the survival of the Nigerian child.

September 12, 2003, "Immunize your children, traditional rulers tell their communities" (60-second follow-up news report in English and Hausa on Sokoto State Television, in reaction to USAID story on polio eradication mobilization efforts.

September 15, 2003, "Immunization, the sure way forward" (25-minute documentary on National Television (NTA), praising USAID contributions to child survival programs, including polio eradication efforts in Nigeria.

#### RADIO:

August 17 September 11, 2003, (60-second) polio eradication jingle (80 slots) in Hausa on Katsina State Radio, using materials provided by USAID and voices of traditional rulers to explain examples of success including small pox.

September 9, 2003, "Zamfara Local Government Chairman praises USAID contributions to polio eradication in northern Nigeria" (5-minute news report on Zamfara State Radio, a Shari'a State and northern Nigeria's most consistent critic of U.S. programs and policies. The report featured government officials and community leaders acknowledging USAID's generosity, and the good work other donor agencies had done with their Nigerian partners in the Health sector.

September 16, 2003, "Yaro Masomin Babba" (child survival) (26-minute Hausa language program, repeated twice) on the north's most-listened to radio station FRCN Kaduna, featured USAID contributions to child survival in Nigeria, including polio eradication effort.

September 10, 2003, "Your children stand a risk of permanent disability" (2-minute news report, featured Sokoto State Chief Medical Director urging parents to participate fully in the polio eradication campaign as follow-up reaction to USAID success story on polio.

#### PRINT:

August 22, 2003 "Al-Mizan," (first segment, full-page articles in Hausa) "The truth about polio," "Polio vaccine is safe says USAID, featured the most balanced report ever written by the most anti-American newspaper in the north. PAS Abuja provided USAID's background materials on polio and an interview with USAID's Garba Abdu on the agency's-led child survival success in northern Nigeria, which countered allegations that the polio vaccine contains impurities including birth control substances and HIV virus.

September 12, 2003' "Al-Mizan," (second segment, full-page articles in Hausa) "Polio vaccine is safe says USAID," "We have not seen any evidence of harm in the polio vaccine says Muslim cleric Sheikh Sanusi Gumbi," used materials provided by USAID, including the agency's success in other child survival advocacy programs.

September 14, 2003, "Gaskiya Ta Fi Kwabo," (2-page interview with USAID's Garba Abdu in Hausa) entitled "USAID

polio success, history of the disease," featured background materials provided by PAS Abuja and USAID.

**IMPACT:** A positive response to the August polio immunization rounds, a better understanding of USAID contributions to polio success, and a change of attitude by some prominent northern religious leaders and institutions that were initially opposed to the program. Sheikh Sanusi Gumbi, a well-respected Muslim cleric based in Kaduna said in an extensive interview after the polio success story ran in Al-Mizan (9/12), "We have not seen any evidence of harm in the Polio Vaccine. America is doing a wonderful job helping the world's needy. It cannot spend its money just to harm children through the polio immunization program. We should all commend its contributions to our national development, especially the eradication of other dangerous diseases such as small pox." Zamfara State Health Commissioner, Alhaji Mohammed Tukur, changed his earlier opposition to the polio program. He commended USAID, UNICEF, WHO and other International implementing partners, and asked Zamfara citizens to cooperate. (Zamfara was the first northern State to ask its citizens not to participate in the polio vaccination exercise)

**EDUCATION: Literacy Enhancement Assistance Program (LEAP)**  
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**TELEVISION:**

August 19, 2003, (3-minute Kano State Television news reports in English and Hausa), featured community leaders commending USAID-assisted LEAP program in Kano State with a sound bite stating, "it will make generations responsible and worthy ambassadors of the society."

August 20, 2003, (5-minute Kano State Television news reports in English and Hausa) on LEAP's Literacy and Numeracy Agenda and the Local Government Authority Fora in Tsanyawa and Municipal Local Government areas of Kano

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State.

August 20, 2003, (5-minute Nasarawa State Television news report on LEAP success in Doma Local Government area, featured Speaker of Nasarawa State House of Assembly commending the USG for "re-kindling hope in our children's future." The Speaker donated two motorcycles for school inspection in appreciation of LEAP students' achievements.

August 25, 2003, (3-minute National Television (NTA) news feature) on rural-based program "Grassroots," featured USAID's Melinda Taylor in a remote village school providing background, funding details and Nigerian partnership information on LEAP to local community and the PTA leadership in Nasarawa State.

August 28, 2003, "LEAPing into the future," (5-minute NTA Network News report) on LEAP success, featured students in Doma Local Government primary schools demonstrating their LEAP-motivated literacy and numeracy skills to the admiration of their satisfied teachers and parents.

**RADIO**

August 20, 2003, (5-minute Nasarawa Broadcasting Service News report) on LEAP success in Doma Local Government area, featured Speaker of Nasarawa State House of Assembly commending USAID's LEAP success and urging community leaders to support the program by donating funds and materials in appreciation just as he did with the donation of two motorcycles for school inspection.

**PRINT:**

August 19, 2003, "New Nigerian," (a quarter page article) background and funding information on LEAP) with materials provided by USAID, and LEAP implementing partners, Education Development Center (EDC), World Education International (WEI), and Research Triangle Institute (RTI).

August 26, 2003, "New Nigerian," (half page) "NGOs want LEAP to cover vocational training," featured interviews with NGO leaders commending LEAP success and contributions to "unprecedented" enrolment figures in Kano schools.

September 2, 2003, "New Nigerian," (Full page, special report) entitled "LEAPing over illiteracy hurdle," featured

LEAP participating teachers testimonies that LEAP has improved the quality of teaching in the benefiting schools.

IMPACT: The impact of the LEAP success is summed up in the words of Speaker of the Nasarawa State House of Assembly, Mohammed Ogoshi Onawo, during the Assembly's session on August 22, in response to the story carried the previous day by the Nasarawa State Broadcasting Service. He said, "Three years ago I was very worried about the future of education, especially in Doma Local Government. However, what I have seen and heard about LEAP yesterday has given me the assurance that the future of LEAP students is bright. We are therefore challenged to secure that bright future and replicate it in other schools within Nasarawa State through appropriate legislation." "Time and history will not erase this from our memory" said Alhaji Alhassan Abdullahi, a parent at Fadimatu Islamiyya School, Kano, referring to the LEAP program on a call-in program on Radio Kano (8/23). NTA reporter, Moji Makanjuola, said that since she did the story, NTA has received several requests from parents who want their children relocated to USAID-assisted LEAP schools.

#### AGRICULTURE:

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#### GUM ARABIC PROGRAM

##### RADIO:

September 6, 2003, (2-minute news report in English and Hausa) on Radio Kano, featured Coordinator of USAID-assisted Gum Arabic Program, Yakasai, commending USAID for creating new hope in agribusiness for northern farmers and Gum Arabic exporters.

September 7 & 8, 2003, (5-minute, lead story in English and Hausa) on FRCN Kaduna, reported, as a "USG-assisted agricultural revolution in the north" by northern Nigeria's most-listened to radio station.

##### PRINT:

September 6, 2003, "Weekly Trust," (5-inch story with News Agency (NAN) report), featured Bello Dantata, Assistant National Secretary of the National Association of Gum Arabic Producers and Processors of Nigeria, in a story entitled "Nigeria exports 11,000 tons of Gum Arabic." Dantata praised USAID for the success of the Gum Arabic Program, adding, "The program has helped Nigerian gum arabic producers gain acceptability in the world market."

September 8, 2003, "The Triumph" (5-inch story with News Agency (NAN) report) "Nigeria exports 11,000 tons of Gum Arabic," success attributed to USAID-assisted Gum Arabic Program.

#### SEED AND FOOD SECURITY PROGRAM

##### RADIO:

September 7 & 8, 2003, (5-minute, lead story) on FRCN Kaduna in English and Hausa, featured field interviews with local farmers overwhelmed with joy over their USAID-increased agricultural incomes, and surprised that America cares even for small-holder farmers like them.

##### PRINT:

September 8, 2003, "The Triumph," (bold-caption, quarter page story) "USAID to boost Agriculture in Nigeria" with quotes from USAID's Andrew Levin, "We at the USAID realize that in order for Nigeria to grow economically, agriculture is the sector where there is an ample opportunity and chance to boost the economy, to improve food security, and generate broader economic growth."

August 27, 2003, "The Path," (half page) report entitled "USAID boosts agriculture in Nigeria, featured statement by USAID Mission Director, Dawn Liberi, during a courtesy call on Nigeria's Agriculture Minister, and background on USAID-Nigeria agricultural partnership success.

IMPACT: Outpouring appreciation and gratitude to the U.S. for a rescue program. FRCN Kaduna reporter, Dhiru Sani Mohammed, said the station has received several calls from listeners expressing surprise at the level of U.S. support for Nigeria's agriculture. He said most of the callers also asked for information on how to participate in the Gum Arabic and food security programs.

## CONFLICT RESOLUTION: Basketball for Peace Program

### TELEVISION:

June 21, 2003, (5-minute report) on Nigerian Television (NTA) Kaduna, reported as a major U.S. contribution to peaceful elections in the 2003 Nigeria elections in the region.

June 28, 2003, (5-minute report) on National Television (NTA) Network News, featured in three different news segments, including prime time news at 9 pm, reported as a major U.S. contribution to conflict resolution, and peaceful elections in 2003 by keeping restive jobless youths "creatively" engaged.

### PRINT:

June 11, 2003, "The Path," (quarter page story) captioned "Basketball for idle youths," featured background provided by USAID and photo of the April 17 competition with the youths at the Embassy compound.

IMPACT: Overwhelmingly positive. NTA Kaduna sports reporter, Anthony Forson, described the Basketball for Peace Program as "a major U.S. contribution to peaceful elections in the 2003 polls in Kaduna State, a state prone to religious and electoral violence. The National Secretary of Youth Sports Federation of Nigeria (YSFON),

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Abdulrazaq Suleiman, told NTA that he wants USAID to introduce the same concept in other sports. Youths in Kafanchan, another violence-prone town in southern Kaduna State, want to join the Basketball for Peace Program.

## WIDERNET: University Connectivity Program

### TELEVISION:

August 19, 2003, (5-minute news report) on Plateau State Television, featured shots of donated computers, and interviews on the impact the WIDERNET program has made to IT knowledge at the benefiting universities, and its effect on the university as a better learning environment.

August 21, 2003, (4-minute news report) on National Television (NTA) prime time Network News at 9 pm, featured shots of donated computers at the University of Ibadan, and comments on the program's benefits to the university community.

August 24, 2003, (5-minute news report) on National Television (NTA) prime time Network News at 9 pm, featured WIDERNET donated computers to University of Jos, and interviews with faculty commending WIDERNET for the initiative and the difference it has made to learning at the university.

### RADIO:

July 29, 2003, (5-minute news report) on FRCN Ibadan channel, featured background information on the WIDERNET program, and interviews with Professor Fagbemi, describing the program as an excellent innovation that has benefited the university community immensely.

August 19, 2003, (2-minute news report) on Plateau Radio, featured background materials provided by WIDERNET, and interviews with Professor Liverpool, Coordinator of the Jos program.

IMPACT: Overwhelming. PAS Coordinator of the Nigerian-America Information Initiative (NAII), Dalhatu Hamza, said he received several calls from university administrators around the country commending the WIDERNET success as "an excellent innovation." Professor Njoku and Professor Uvah, both Directors at the National Universities Commission (NUC) requested extension of the WIDERNET program to other Nigerian universities.

14. Results: Unprecedented and highly positive. It has established better linkages between the Nigerian media and USG agencies operating in Nigeria, which we hope will continue in the future.

Comment: The success story initiative has gone far to broaden Nigerian public awareness regarding the scope of U.S. government assistance efforts in Nigeria. We also successfully used the initiative to facilitate greater public focus on the lingering resistance to polio eradication efforts in northern Nigeria. The lack of an effective government media and public education campaign has played a role in the continuing prevalence of polio and lack of public acceptance in some states. The Mission's polio programs underscored USG financial support to the multilateral eradication program underway in Nigeria, but also provided the public with reliable medical information to counter the claims that the vaccine is unsafe, or may contain family planning medication or the HIV/AIDS virus. We are still compiling response information from media outlets who have run success stories, and will send in a follow-on cable. End comment.

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